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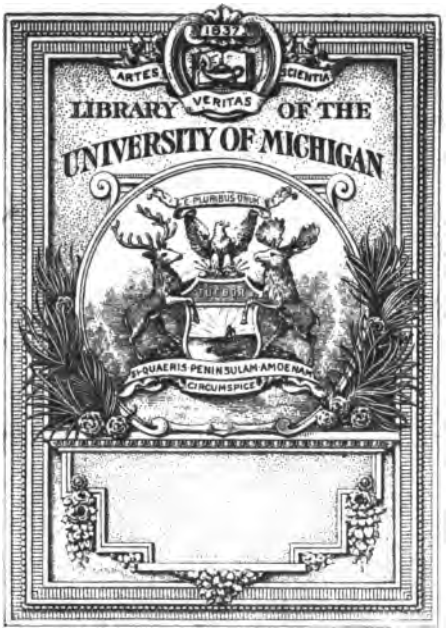
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CHANGING VOICES AND OTHER POEMS

R. D. BRODIE

BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
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CHANGING VOICES

CHANGING VOICES

So many voices fill the earth around
No human ear can gather all the tunes
But some one voice predominant is heard
As when the swelling notes of some sweet bird
O'er-whelm all nature's quieter timid runes,
And make that spot for us enchanted ground,
That 'neath their spell we hear that voice
alone
And silent others seem till that is gone.

And yet another day for us that voice
May rise and swell unnoted on the breeze,
Another sound with power constrains the ear,
And hearing it we it alone can hear,
Though it be sad and have no charm to please
But jars us with its discord and its noise.

A CANCELLED BEREAVEMENT

Outside the mourners raised their hideous
wail;
She only wept; and from her widow's veil
There came in sorrow's deepest, saddest tone,
'Mid choking sobs, the mother's hopeless
moan:—
My son, my only son.

She followed when they bore him from her
side
To lay her dead with others who had died.
So sad! so full her bitterness of fears!
Her future—O, how desolate its years,
Alone, without her son!

"Weep not." What means that loving word
she hears,
That seeks with tenderness to dry her tears?
"Thy son comes back in strength to be thy
stay;
The Love of God shall break death's cords
to-day;
I give thee here thy son."

HEARTEASE

Through all the years that memory holds our
hearts have known the craving
That calls with hunger keen and strong for
human nature's saving—
The love that gives itself to love and fills our
being truly,
And, though impassioned, always calm, nor
yet displayed unduly.
The loves of earth are partial all and often
evanescent;
They fail to satisfy the heart with yearning
ever present.
They smile to-day, to-morrow frown; in scorn
or thoughtless folly
They wound a friend with cut so deep he ne'er
recovers wholly.
We touch at certain points and part, a wall
seems to divide us;
A gentle warmth is in the touch, the parting
seems to chide us:
That wall is seldom broken down as seldom
clambered over;
And so "acquaintance" still we say, when love
would have said "lover."
But, O Thou Love, all loves above, that
yearning love desireth,
Thou comfort of each hungry soul that Thee
alone requireth,
Give us to know the love Thou hast for us if
we but take it;

Teach us to bring our thirst to Thee and in
thy fullness slake it.
So shall our lives be free from lack, supplied
from Thine o'er-flowing,
No evanescence greet us there, nor moods that
pass our knowing,
But plentiful to meet each need, each pain and
woe to banish
The ocean of Thy love gives rest and all our
worries vanish.

ABIDING LIGHT

Clouds and storm are all around us,
  Light of day is dim and weak;
Hope is sinking, dread approaches;
  Anxious are the thoughts we speak.

Little feet are needing cover,
  Little bodies must be fed;
How, if long the storm continues,
  Shall we find the children's bread?

All the gathering clouds of nature,
  All the darkness of our life,
Fill us with their sad misgivings,—
  Must we perish in the strife?

Perish with our work unfinished,
  Cherished hopes like grain cut down?
Nature's powers, our strength opposing,
  Thwart us with their constant frown.

How the dismal thought of failure
  Bleeds the heart that bravely strives
For the welfare of its loved ones,
  The upbuilding of their lives!

Ah! Were there but cloud and sorrow
  Faint might grow the stoutest heart;
In its burdened hour of darkness
  Seeing its fond hopes depart.

But it is not always darkness
Though the clouds shut out the light;
Nor will sorrow hold its triumph
Through a woeful life of night.

Over nature's clouds and changes,
Over our disturbing fears,
Is the God who rules the ages
Sympathizing in our tears.

Light and life are his forever,
And He cares for you and me;
Nought shall fail of His good purpose,
Though His light we cannot see.

Beyond the cloud where vision ends
Still His light its beams doth shed;
And though doubt doth overlook them
Fall His blessings on our head.

Other trials have passed over,
And the clouds have given place
To the hours of sun and brightness,
And the smiling of His face.

Could we but dislodge our doubting,
And believe in Perfect Love,
We should never know dejection,
Trusting in our God above.

A HAND

Perhaps a tiny dimpling thing,
  Temptation great to willing lips—
A thing on which to feast the eyes
  From chubby wrist to finger tips.
A thing that woos our tender thoughts,
  A mystery of suggestiveness—
A something that we fain would take
  And hold in constant sweet caress.

Perhaps a hand from which have fled
  The dimples of its infant days,
And yet a plump and coaxing hand
  That wins its hold in many ways.
Its daring touch is full of power,
  It rules by right of loving will;
When its deft fingers weave our locks
  We bear for the ecstatic thrill.

Perhaps a hand from mischief's years,
  When balls are thrown and hooks are set—
A nimble hand and yet a strong,
  Whose color may be white or jet.
A hand we see with thankfulness
  (When sleep its eagerness restrains)
Is still a hand, and in its place,
  And free from ought but trivial pains.

Perhaps a hand slender and fair,
  A dream of perfect moving grace—
A charm that in its mission bears
  A mark we never would efface.

A hand, held by another hand,
Sweet captive which is captor too;
Yielding itself to golden band
That marks the unity of two.

Perhaps a mother's hand that holds
A sickly babe upon her knee,
Picture of loving tenderness
Greater than which we may not see.
So gentle and so welcome falls
The soothing of a loving heart.
That suff'ring flees before its touch
And sickness hastens to depart.

Perhaps a hand grown old and gaunt,
From which the power of work has gone,
Woeful and sad in its distress
It seems so much apart, alone.
And yet, clasped in another hand
That with it four-score years has been
It marks the motion of a heart
Upraised to God, the great Unseen.

LINES WRITTEN ON RECEIPT OF AN INVITATION TO COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

I got the commencement programme; its appearance is surely fine;
The printer did his duty well and the reader knew the sign;
But the finest thing about it (if the word I dare to say),
Is your splendid working motto: Dura comprehenditë.*

The outlook that lies before you shows many a hill to climb,
The getting up is wearying and demands both strength and time;
But the heart that has its purpose firmly set may safely say
Strong endeavor shall achieve it; Dura comprehenditë.

Side by side with the upward road is another easier far,
Its bed is smooth and broad enough and its gates wide open are.
Motto: facilis decensus,† did it dare it to display.
Shun it; choose the upward struggling: Dura Comprehenditë.

———

*Dura comprehendite (grapple the hard things).
†Facilis decensus (going down is easy).

Each hard lesson in your studies grapple with
your mental strength
Wrestle with it undiscouraged till you make it
yours at length.
Wealth of mine may come in leisure, learning
never came by play;
Only they who work acquire it: Dura com-
prehenditë.

Take your place among the workers, never
think your lot is hard;
Be continuous in your efforts, be most constant
on your guard.
Let no day escape unrifled, each its passing
toll should pay;
Grapple fast, possess its treasures; Dura com-
prehenditë.

AT CLOSE OF DAY

Wearied with daily toil and weight of sadness,
Now, at close of day I come to Thee.
I know not what I need nor how to ask it,
But in goodness give Thou all to me;—
The sleep I need and the refreshing.
Thy care for all my loved ones whom I bear
Upon my heart unto Thy throne of grace.
I would that we were perfect in Thy sight,
But we are not: forgive our sins and in Thy mercy spare.
I come. It may be my last coming, thus, at close of day to Thee.
Thou may'st require my soul from me ere morning,
And in the great world of rest and waiting I may be,
Ere once again the morning breaks.
O, grant that I may rest with those who shall receive
A place beside the crystal sea,
And grant, I pray Thee, that in that fair land
Mine eyes may see and arms embrace
Those, my loved ones, whom, even here, I seek to bless.

A LITTLE GIRL

The leaves were falling in the woods,
  The fields were showing brown and sere;
All nature most distinctly said:
  Behold the waning of the year.

A little girl, with busy feet,
  Had gathered posies day by day;
When wild-flowers failed she begged from friends
  Who loved and never said her nay.

Each little cultivated plot,
  That near her home held its array,
Was open to that little trot
  Who held their owners' hearts in sway.

And so in other years may be
  A wider world of hearts than these,
If her sweet life she sheds around
  On all the other lives she sees.

And many beds of richer flowers
  Shall open to her pleading hands,
If still she wields love's sceptre well
  And serves, herself, at love's demands.

SLEEP

Rest, weary one; leave God to bless
The object of thy labor's prayer.
Lay down thy head as on his breast,
Trust in his love and watchful care.

Thy battle's strain hath made thee sore,
Thy soul is worn with ceaseless strife;
Thy body spent amid the roar
And tumult of thy daily life.

But vain thy wrestling if the Lord
Be not well-pleased thy cause to keep;
Good effort he will honor, rest;—
He giveth his beloved sleep.

Commit thine hours to Him, and rest
Calm and secure in thy repose;
Then rise refreshed and seek his strength
Once more to battle with thy foes,

To guard the lip, and guard the eye,
To close the ear to whispered sin,
To struggle with thine own wild heart
Till thou hast conquered self within.

Seeking the purity that sees
God's angels who around thee keep
Their watch, and then renew thy rest;—
He giveth his beloved sleep.

This battle hath no end below;
  There is no discharge in this war;
Where went the leader we must go
  Though faint we follow and afar.

Faithful, enduring to the end,
  His strength shall bear us to the hour
When the last conflict shall be fought
  And we shall triumph in His power.

No more at morn to early rise,
  At night no longer watch to keep,
No more the bread of sorrows! so
  He giveth his beloved sleep.

WHAT WILL MY CAPTAIN SAY?

Only a man with a human heart and hope for
a longer life;
Only a seaman, but at his post in calm as well
as in strife.
Only a warship waiting there with steam re-
duced and anchors down;
Only a liner outward bound from the port of
Southampton town.
England's shores were hidden near. Fog had
thickly veiled the silent bay,
With curbëd speed through the shadowy
white the liner made her way.
A sudden cry, a ship ahead; so near she lay
and motionless!
Full speed astern, too late, she strikes; lower
the boats they're in distress.
Near where the sharp prow cleft her side the
seaman stood at duty's call.
The first impression on his sense was loss—of
ship, comrades, and all.
Instinctive action, unreflecting, placed him on
the liner's deck
Ere thought could change or mind compose
to hold the impulse well in check.
A moment later, swift returning, discipline
resumed its sway
And duty shamed him—"Oh, what have I
done! What will my captain say?"
Swift as he came, as swift leapt back, nor
sought his act to vindicate;
But for a moment's weakness to atone hast-
ened to meet his fate.

That fate relented mattered not, his splendid
loyalty had won;
He stood with his captain through that hour,
and his spirit said well done.

TO A WORN PRAYER BOOK

You little book and dear
That often bringeth cheer
To a heart that is sad,
Yet giveth joyful note
Unto a willing throat,
Or a heart when it's glad.

What wanderings have we seen
And where together been
Since the day I got you!
And still thy worth remains
Amid thy many stains
Unchanged from the new.

Another monarch's name
Links with Great Britain's fame,
Nor pray we any more:
Our good Victoria bless
And give her cause success
From near to utmost shore.

And in another land
'Neath other flag I stand
'Mong folks who use thee not.
Thy form still brings to mind
Many good deeds and kind
Which should not be forgot.

And though thy day be past
Thy litany doth last,
(I love to use it still.)
May He through it addressed
With His love fill my breast
And make me do His will.

MEMORIAL DAY

To-day a nation gathers round the tombs
where soldiers lie;
Her leaders speak the praises of the dead
there laid to rest,
Who, in their day and in their place, the Union flag held high,
And drew together North and South and
bound the East and West,—
From out of many severed parts made
one united whole,
And with their lives they gave it strength
and with their death a soul.

The faith in which they lived and died gave
it a seed of hope;
Their wisdom showed the manner and their
sons—they found the way,
Until a greater nation with an ever-widening
scope
They found a mighty nation's part among
the great to play,
And they bore their burden bravely still
seeking to maintain
The freedom of their people from the
mountains to the main.

And with seemly thought they gather on each
Memorial day
To mark the resting-places and to honor in
their speech

The valor of the various corps that stood firm
in the fray,
The spirit of the leaders who were fore-
most in the breech.
And they teach their children wisely that
they should honor show
For the soldiers of their country who
bore her hour of woe.

As a child among the nations was once this na-
tion known,
By eager haste and youthful dreams and
childhood's lack of caste;
But all its youthful vigor had a temper of its
own,
When it settled on a purpose it held it firm
and fast
And the growing state rode safely
though in a troubled sea
With wealth's subtle shoals around her
and self upon her lee.

But ever in her greatest need she found a mas-
ter true
Who held her steady in her course that
made for honor's goals,
And in his care she weathered every dang'rous
wind that blew,
And he found the proper pilots to thread
the treach'rous shoals,
Till in the nations' gatherings she re-
receives the honors shown
To a nation that has done her part and is
to stature grown.

But as the years succeed the years like needs
arise anew;
The Union still is to maintain and save
from evil stress;
She needs unselfish hearts to plan, unselfish
hands to do;
And the brightness of her honor is kept by
watchfulness.
Her hope is in her trainëd youth, who,
well-taught in statehood's lore,
Lay their hearts upon her altars as their
fathers did before.

A MODERN PSALM

O Lord, the proud are risen up
  Thy servants' path around.
They flaunt their emblems everywhere,
  They crush us to the ground.
They do not love our holy faith
  But court it for its aid;
'Neath the mantle of its worship
  They practice unafraid.
They seek to buy its ministers
  To speak of pleasant things;
They do not wish to hear it said
  Their riches may take wings.
They do not wish to hear the woes
  That from thy lips once fell,
When to thy humble followers
  Thy precepts Thou didst tell;
As on the lowly toilers' lot
  Thy blessing Thou did'st lay,
And bade them love and work and trust,
  Flee doubt, and watch and pray.
For riches Thou gav'st little hope
  That they could Heaven win,
A camel easier could pass
  A needle's eye within,
But blessing on Thy poor was laid;
  O, bring us very near,
And give to us the heritage
  Of those Thy name that fear.

O Lord, the proud are risen up,
They make it hard to live;
They fashion all the modes in vogue,
Whose voice is always give;
And on the poor who can't conform
They raise the haughty brow;
And none may go where lore is taught
Save so as they allow.
Our children look with wonder's eyes
Because we cannot spare
The wearing and the spending which
Wealth's pampered children share.
They do not understand as yet
How poverty is bless'd;
To them to lack what others have
Is to be sore distressed.
O Lord, to them give early, please,
Discerning light between
The wealth that ever doth abide
And passing earthly sheen;
Teach them the love of wisdom's store
That they its words may heed,
And walk its paths unceasingly
Until they win its meed.
And grant that they with us may know
Thy presence ever near;
Lord, give us all the heritage
Of those thy name that fear.

VIA SOLITARIA

Alone he went to seek for health though well
he knew
That first the gates of death he should pass
through, and sleep,
Ere his frail body found again its former
strength;
And that for him fond absent hearts would
sadly weep,
As men will mourn their dead, in spite of
Christian faith,
Believing, yet awhile unheeding, what it
saith.

Alone he went, and though he bore a heavy
cross,
He could not bear that others, suff'ring
with his pain,
Should look into his eyes and smile and bid
him cheer
While they betrayed that in their thoughts
they ne'er again
Looked for the deep unhampered breath
from weakness freed
But hoped, at best, that slowly should
the life recede.

And where the Western mountains raise their
lofty heads,
A little while he rested till his change
should come;

A little while of suff'ring that was bravely
borne,
A few kind words to others,—then his lips
were dumb.
Into His Father's hand he gave his soul
to keep,
Then to the nearer presence passed as in
a sleep.

Strange hands but kind for him the last sad
service did,
And nought was lacking of accustomed
care but kin;
The church to him her solemn rites most glad-
ly gave
And he, in sleep, was borne her sacred
courts within;
Then earth to earth; but the unfettered
soul could roam
Among the mysteries that lie 'twixt here
and home.

EVENING RETROSPECT

My soul in silence weeps in the quiet ev'ning
hour,
When the busy day is hushed and conscience
hath its power;
For, spread before its searching gaze,
The sheet, that was at morning fair,
Is foul and stained in various ways
And many grevious marks are there.
O! fair and bright in stainless white
Is each new morn when we awake;
But wrongs are done and good we shun
As our ev'ry-day round we make;
And marks show there of love restrain'd
When clear the call of love was seen;
And the bitter thoughts we cherished,—
These have dimmed the once perfect
sheen.

My soul in silence weeps as it passes in review
Sins it oft has mourned before and mourneth
now anew;
And the heart is heavy and sore
And droops 'neath the load of its woe,
That to sins that triumphed before
It should see the victory go.
O! the sadness of the vision!
How great the weight of such a shame!
Morn I marked with new decision
And evening is too black to name.

Most hateful thoughts I did not speak,
Incisive words by tongue set free,
With Vanity's recurring lust
Have, O, so sadly! humbled me.

My soul in silence weeps as in pain it mourns its fall,
Dreading in spite of hope its sins' continuous thrall;
But weakness is my own, and power cometh Lord from Thee:
My soul do Thou restore and in mercy smile on me.

SIC TRANSIT

We wake, yet drowsily, and rise
To a short'ning day of labor,
We pause to rest at early noon,
Soon the falling night is neighbor.
And so the wider day of life:
Half waking we begin its race
Earnest awhile, with zeal press on
To reach some much desirëd place;
Then worn we close our eyes in sleep
Born of the impenetrable deep.

THE GRAVE OF HOPE

I found that lonely, cheerless, spot,
When from my usual course I strayed;
And in my wanderings I sought
The scene of ventures long delayed.

Where men for min'ral wealth had made
A road into the rocky wild,
And dreamed of cities there to rise
If fickle fortune on them smiled.

Last haunt of human kind, it stood,
Ere they the travell'd highway left
And striking for the mountain's brow
With hopeful toil a roadway cleft.

The scenes of their defeat I sought
But had not thought so near to find
The tokens of another fall
More deeply sorrowful in kind.

The little house still firmly stood,
Built of hewn logs that jointed well.
What hopes the builder must have had
The nature of his work will tell.

With care he'd finished out and in;
Each little room was cozy made.
There he prepared the winters storms
To meet, and smile at, unafraid.

Beyond his house, but very near,
He built a stable snug and warm;
And close beside a little cot
To shield his sheep from ev'ry harm.

Little by little he had cleared
The land around his new-found home.
In front his labor had disclosed
A rapid torrent's angry foam.

And great his joy when he could stand,
With wife and children near his door,
And see the water, whit'ning fall
From jutting rock to craggy floor.

And other feelings in his breast
Were mingled with his pride and joy,
When to their son his wife had said,
"Our home is beautiful, my boy."

How well they labored let the ground
Out of her fatness witness bear
The clover sod still in the field—
Stray flowers to mark a garden fair.

Then ev'ry morn to them was bright
And cheerful hope set not at all;
No dark'ning shadows hid their light
Nor warned of their impending fall.

But not less awful was the stroke
That it without a warning fell.
No enemy had wished them such
Else, surely, he had hated well.

Diptheria, that dreaded thing,
Fastened upon their only son;
And as fierce beast its victim holds
It held him till his life was run.

No neighbor aided in their need.
Distance and fear kept them away.
The father's arm the timber hewed
That hid the son from light of day.

In agony he dug the grave
Still seen behind that cottage drear
There stricken parents laid their boy
And shed the unavailing tear.

They lived; or did they? Was it life—
At morn to wish the day was past;
At night on sleepless couch to toss
Till morn her gray forewarnings cast?

They still went on about their work,
But on their will a palsy lay.
Each saw how blighted were their hopes
Yet, bravely, each forebore to say.

The produce of the field declared
The lack of the impelling power;
The hands that wove the winter's warmth
Had less to give than wonted dower.

Through winter's storms they still held on—
The habit from a former hope—
Though well they knew that hope was gone
That nerved them with the wild to cope.

That year the cold was keen and long;
Ere spring the fodder scanty grew;
Lean were their cattle, sad their hearts,
When May, at last, the cold o'er-threw.

The woodpile that each former spring
Had stored next winter's heat away,
Was scarce begun when seed-time came
With warmth and flowers and lambs at play.

May-hap returning spring had brought
Emotion like its by-gone thrill,
When balmy airs and growing things
With gladness used their hearts to fill.

But that the pinch of winter left
Their youngest child with cold distressed,
And tender care and gentle spring
Failed to relieve the choked-up breast.

Pneumonia, they said it was,
That stole that youthful life away,
And for her living presence left
A silent form of human clay.

Beside her brother she was laid.
The two graves fill that little plot.
There in tears the mother planted
Immortelles and forget-me-not,

And at their heads a golden glow,
Which, still untouched by browsing deer,
O'er them its yellow glory spreads
When autumn winds are chill and drear.

Around their bed, their father built,
Of cedar-wood and six rails high,
A fence, well bound with cords of steel,
To guard the rest in which they lie.

That duty done, with old-time vigor
Born of a purpose new and sad,
He sold, or failing, gave away
Each living creature that he had.

His home and clearing none would buy
Nor would they take them as a gift;
And, so, today they still remain—
Memorial of misplaced thrift.

Once more they looked out o'er the stream,
Once more went through their little home,
Once more they wept beside their dead,
Then, homeless, they set out to roam.

No longer filled with hope to do,
To make and save for years to come,
But hopeful only to be brave,
And always, of their suff'rings, dumb.

* * * * * *

Perhaps we meet them, you and I,
In town or city's crowded street—
A man from whom the weight of years
Has ta'en the swiftness of the feet.

A man, whose form bespeaks past strength,
Simple in life, in habit sad,
Shunning the rush and crush of men
Who in their eager haste go mad;

With lines upon his face that mark
The power of sorrow's deeper sway,
And, sometimes, in his eyes a look
That is bent on the far-away.

Perhaps we meet her in the mart
Where she their humble wants supplies—
Sweet-faced with sorrow's discipline
That she hides 'neath her cheerful guise.

Her voice is tender in its tone,
Her greeting is kindly spoken;
And yet,—we feel that cheerful mask
Conceals a heart that is broken.

The fellow-feeling of our kind
Perceives, unaided by the eyes,
Her smiles are but the ripened fruit
That grows from resignation's sighs.

And of their one left child? Is she
A solace ever by their side,
Graced with the willing hands and feet
Their weight of labor to divide?

Or,—is she wife and mother, too,
  Oft seeing in her children dear,
The image of her sister laid
  In that lone, distant spot so drear?

Three hearts are these that never quite
  Will lose the mem'ry of their pain,
But, in reflective moments, still
  Will see those lonely graves again.

Three graves! Two in the little plot
  Where children twain lie side by side;
Their former home, the grave of hope,
  The spot where their ambition died.

* * * * * *

What added warrant could you find,
  Ecclesiastes, in that place
For your sad cry of vanity
  That sorely doth delude our race?

Where they their chiefest treasures kept
  The wild-bird now her brood doth raise.
Where-in is value if it pass
  Like morning mist in summer days?

Wherein is value? Is it not
  In that which ups and downs defies—
In Love that never fails but draws
  With growing strength toward the skies?

A WHOLE-HEARTED GIFT

In a pleasant Eastern village—
'Tis thus the story goes—
Lived a little crippled maiden
Sad with her load of woes.

So lame her feet she needs must sit
Through all the weary day
Where-e'er by kind hands she was set
To watch the others play.

Her parents poor no means had found
To help their helpless child
Who realized their poverty
And, suffering, still smiled.

Yet in her heart was longing great
To move from place to place,
And see her comrades near at hand
As happy games they'd trace.

But neighbors, though they too were poor,
Gave what they ill could spare;
And bought good crutches for the maid
Who round on them could fare.

To her they were a source of joy,
They made her life seem good.
How rich she felt when by their aid
Across the square she stood!

Beyond the square a little church
God's goodness called to mind;
And there a faithful preacher taught
The willing he could find.

Long had he labor'd in that charge
And little int'rest roused;
Indiff'rence with the villagers,
Was most securely housed.

Oft through his work though not of it
He weary grew and sad,
And far and farther seemed the morn
Whose dawn should make him glad.

Who keepeth Isr'el never sleeps:
His comfort was at hand;
And from an unexpected source
Sprang strong within that band.

Oft had the preacher pled for woe
That hunger might be fed,
And meagre was the bounty given
To send the starving bread.

More oft for ignorance he begged—
That what they had they'd share,
To spread the story of that One
Fairest 'mong many fair.

And once again in tenderness
He plead, for Christ's great love,

That they should give as He had given
Who gave his home above.

The ushers went their usual round
And got the common dole;
It seemed as if the preacher's plea
Had failed to stir a soul.

One pew remained where sat alone
The little cripple maid;
The usher courteously approached
Yet hesitating stayed,

Lest one so poor had nought to give
And might feel hurt and sore
If heedless and obtrusively
The plate was passed before.

The maid an answ'ring movement made
While filled her eyes with tears.
Much did it cost to give her gift—
Much striving, many fears.

Yet for the sake of His great love
That did her heart enthrall,
She laid her crutches on the plate
Giving her wealth—her all.

With careful hand the usher held
Them balanced up the aisle,
Then gently laid them at the desk
With comprehending smile.

A wondrous hush was in that room
When on their senses fell
The perfectness of that child's gift,
Passing what words could tell.

A white-haired man the silence broke:
In choking voice he said:—
"I redeem the crutches brothers,"
Then pointed to the maid.

All in the little church beheld,
As he laid down the fee,
That tear-drops fell beside it so
He scarce the plate could see.

Emotion spread and all were stirred,
And dim grew many eyes.
That dimness let the hearts see clear
Duty and sacrifice.

There were those who sat indiff'rent
To the strong voice of Love,
Who by this simple act were moved
Their selfishness above.

And they gave as never before
In feeling and in wealth;
And some were there whose spirits took
Their first step toward health.

The cords that then with life first thrilled
Will not be still again,
But ever the cry of sorrow
Will move them with its pain.

VINCIT QUI SE VINCIT

The blessing of the Lord of Hosts, by Israel
declared
In that far off home in Egypt his son for him
prepared,
Had come upon the people great who from
his stock had grown
Till numbers led to sins of pride entangling
e'en the throne.

But the warrior,—king and captain—after
the rod was stayed,
Had set his affairs in order and for his people
prayed;
Then on Bath-sheba's loyal son had put the
signs of state,
And bade him live in peace and build, be just
as he was great.

Soon the young king saw his vision and sought
for wisdom's dow'r,
And from God well pleasëd received wisdom
with wealth and power.
For long years he served his people in that
most trying place;
Hiding favor from the wicked, the poor be-
held his face.

Wearied in the cause of justice quiet he'd seek
and rest,
And like lonely Jacob wrestling in prayer he
was blest;

Then reflecting solitary strange things would strangely weigh
Giving thoughts and words and deeds a spiritual assay.

And the worthy things that came forth unscath'd from the trial,
Set he down as wisdom's dogmas that take no denial.
He thought of many warriors his fathers throne around,
Their mighty deeds, their hateful crimes, the end that they had found:

He thought of one, of name unwrit, who by his actions told
That he himself had conquered well and did his conquest hold.
Against him were no bloody crimes, no charge of lust preferred,
His sword would flash at duty's call but ne'er in vengeance erred;

His word was always fitly given, his speech was free from guile,
His choice was ever manhood's part disdaining trick and wile.
And, so, against these men of note the king in balance flung
This lowly man of self-restraint and high in air there swung

That band of daring warriors before whom cities fell,
For in the balance of the soul true worth alone would tell.
Then the king bade write this proverb: Who doth his soul restrain
Is greater far than he who leads a fiery conqu'ring train.

Great changes came in later years. Isr'el her God forsook.
No pleading heard she; and no word from her own holy book
Could move her to Jehovah's will; no warning of her end
Could bring back to her wayward heart the love of God her friend.

So his protection he withdrew. Her foemen gathered round.
Her children went to lands afar; her chiefs in chains were bound.
Her name as Isr'el ceases here; and till on other shore
By other name we find her called we hear of her no more.

The wickedness of Judah met a punishment as just—
Borne down by many conquerors, then scattered like fine dust.

Her sons are found in ev'ry land: they bear
their nation's woe;
Still they keep the hope of promise—Thou
shalt to zion go.

Of rediscovered Israel, in other speech and
name,
Young nations rise 'neath western skies her
heritage to claim—
The larger word of prophecy that God the
Father spake,
That they should broken be by none, and
many should they break,

The blessing of the breast and womb, the
blessing of the arm,
The power to put the wicked down, to shield
the weak from harm.
And of that race in Britain's isle in troublous
times and hard
When the English race was feeble, its free-
dom hard to guard,
Rose Alfred son of Aethelwulf, the first of
English kings
Who gave his people learning's boon, their
arms the power of wings,
Who set foundations broad and deep on which
the state might stand,
That would rise from lowly Wessex and be
an empire grand.

This noble youth at divers times in trying straits was found,
His people scattered from their homes, their homes rased to the ground.
He might, like others, then have chos'n to flee and be at ease,
And leave his people to their foes whose greed naught could appease;
But he chose to suffer rather with his young English state,
And bide his time with patience long and work as well as wait.
And the conquest of the spirit by this young ruler gained,
Saved English love of liberty that with the race remained.

Since Alfred's time long vistas lie dim with the mists of years;
The race he cherished in its youth has grown through toil and tears;
Till the multitude of nations, to Jacob's grandson giv'n,
Is spread through all the earth abroad in lands from darkness riv'n.

And the enabling wings, first spread by Alfred for his state,
Grew from their primal weakness rude to lofty ships and great.
Their trade in peace, their voice in war, is found in ev'ry sea,
Their flag bespeaks that freedom still wherewith he made them free.

They in their sev'ral branches keep a watch
upon the main;
The robbers cease before their power, their
rights the weak regain.
In ev'ry noble cause and good they bear a
foremost part,
The sorrow of the suffering is ever on their
heart.

The high ideals of their race are those that
Alfred set:—
The home secure for love's abode—the home
they hallow yet—
Their time in thirds, to labor giv'n, to sleep's
refreshing hours,
To worship God and recreate both mind and
body's powers;
To keep the state in righteousness as well as
honor's van—
To teach each child eternal truth, to empha-
size the man.
A thousand years have come and gone, red-
writ on hist'ry's page,
Still these noble hopes of Alfred, nearer, pos-
sess the age.

Our greatness, as among the great, is in pro-
portion just
As we give our lives in duty to those who are
our trust,
To the weak among our fellows who sink up-
on the way,
To the dark among the nations who need the
light of day.

In conquest of our selfish dreams we elevate
our race
And make it easier for our sons who follow in
their place
To apprehend this lesson grand—to teach
both men and state,
That they themselves must conquer first
whose conquests would be great.
The greatest men build up their lives upon
this noble plan,
In self-restraint and helpfulness raising their
fellow-man.
And all the states in faith and truth who to
this purpose hold,
Show self-control is more than might and
righteousness than gold.

ABIGAIL

O, wise beyond thy time! If so it be
That wisdom can be greater with the years.
At whose feet sat'st thou in that long ago
Unsafe, unrestful, anxious unto fears?

How came it that thou first should wed a fool,
Thou whose endowments did thee fit to mate
A king of world-renown whose name endures
Through many cycles, 'mong the greatest, great?

Wert thou the child of prudent poverty,
By lust of wealth upon the altar laid,
When churlish Nabal of the many flocks
To win thy beauty for his home essayed?

Or brought'st thou to his home to serve thy hand,
The maidens five who went with thee to meet
The angry cheftain of the wilderness
With gifts of wine to drink and food to eat?

If so, what folly moved thy guardian's heart
To close his thoughts to selfishness and pride,
That to be folly's partner thou wast given
Till death, in mercy, from him did divide?

How shall we know? And what thy mother's
name,
And what thy father's house in Israel
The passing years have hid. We only know
That thou had'st learnëd wisdom's lesson
well.

Still in your youth, you found your place with
him
Called to be king—first of a noble line;
And though we lose thee 'mong the brave and
wise
Whose many virtues round his throne did
shine,

Yet well we know thy wisdom helped the state
When oft the king was troubled through
dark years,
For in the records of their strife and pain
Neither thy son's name nor thine own ap-
pears.

But living wisely still thou did'st eschew
Ambition's call that others drew to sin,
And loyal, loving, peaceful thou did'st dwell
Patient and meek thy husband's realm
within.

Than thine what son could better teaching
have?
Earth's all is theirs who know how to be
meek;
And worthier than pomp or power it is
The beauty of humility to seek.

VASHTI

For six long months, continuously,
The monarch with his lords did feast
And showed the treasures of his state,
From Western seas to distant East.
Then to the city's lowlier throng
For still one week he spread the board
That all might taste as they should choose,
The favor of their king and lord.
Once in his brain, inflamed by wine,
A most unusual thought had place,
That he the crowd his queen would show
In all her beauty and her grace.
"Bid Vashti come," he gave command
To those who waited on his hand,
"My people shall this day behold
The beauteous queen of all this land."

But Vashti came not. In her place
As she her sex did entertain
Unhesitating she refused
To do that thing whate'er the pain.
Full well she knew, when thus she chose,
No more she'd hold the queenly state;
A lowly prison house or death,
She knew, would be her speedy fate.
But greater than her royal state
Her woman's honor on her lay;
Before that throng of revellers
No woman should make such display.

O, Vashti! In these distant years
What was thine end we cannot tell,
Whether in lonely banishment
Or swiftly by the sword you fell.
But Media's sceptre from thee riv'n
Far wider realm hath given thee,
And the honor thou did'st honor
Still helps to make thy sisters free.
Peer of noblest Roman matron!
No folly looks to thee for lead,
But thy brav'ry is remembered
And thou art still a queen indeed.

"I go this way as thou dost bid
Fond guardian of my orphan years,
But, know,—who enters unbesought,
Enters indeed through many fears."

"One law, 'tis death, obtaineth there
For all save whom he favor shows,
And gives the golden scepter's tip
That they to him may tell their woes."

"But fast for me all of my blood
Three days and nights continuously.
My maids and I will likewise fast,
To find grace with the king I'll pray."

"Then with a chastened heart I'll cross,
Fearful, that fateful threshold o'er;
And if I perish,—so be it,
This evil lies not at my door."

God gave her favor in his sight,
And gracious her reception was;
Despite her fears and customs stern
Of ancient Media's steadfast laws.

"We are sold, I and my people,
Gracious king, regard my cry;
If thine eyes see me with favor
My humble suit do not deny."

"Give me my life, O king, I pray;
Give me, I beg, my people too;
For our enemy hath wronged us
His savage hatred to pursue."

"Death and destruction are the lot
Our enemy hath planned for us;
Had it been less—been slavery—
I had not dared approach thee thus."

"But, O my king if I spake not,
And we should perish one and all;
What race is there that could replace
The loss you suffer by our fall."

"Then, O my king, I pray thee save
The head thy favor hath raised up;
And save the people of my blood,
Lest I drink death in sorrow's cup."

Brave was her plea, great her success;
And new through many, many years,
A nation celebrates her deed,
And fondly still her name reveres.

And more,—where-e'er this story goes
Of brav'ry in these ancient days,
Thy name, O Esther, is a joy
Lips part to speak in tender praise.

WORK-TIME SONG

There are songs we love when we gather in
From the calls of the busy day—
From the roads and rocks and the deeds that win
The things that we use by the way.
There are songs that sway us with love's soft spells,
Or fill us with filial pride—
That tell us the story of wedding bells
Or of how our forefathers died.
There are songs of the sad,
There are songs of the glad,
There are songs of the brave and fair;
There are songs of tears,
There are songs of fears,
There are songs of music rare,—
All these are the songs of the playful hour
That comes as a part of labor's dow'r.

There are songs of the soul as it passes
Through its time of trial here,
There are songs of its slow upbuilding
As it rises to God more near.
There are songs of the faithful witnessings
Of holy martyrs at the stake,
Who denied the world's cunning caressings,
Unswerving, their high course to take.
Oft we sing of their pains
And we sing of the gains
Their sufferings wrought for men;

We sing of their joy,
Now free from alloy,
With them we praise God again.
And these are the songs of the restful time
We couple in thought with the church-bell's chime.

There are songs that laborers love to hear
In factory, mine, or quarry;
Where brave men in thousands toil through the year
Dread poverty's thrust to parry;
For the coal from the mine has been taken
And with water made to serve
In the heavier burdens man once bore
In rack of muscle and nerve.
And the loud shriek is sweet
Of the white misty sheet,
As from its cell it rushes,
Or with pounding shock
Strikes the drill on rock
And small its strong grain crushes.
And the weary body is glad of rest
From the heavy burdens steam beareth best.

With all of steam's jarring rumble and noise
There's a music of its own,
Filled full with majestic movement and poise
To the ear to hearing grown,
And the free air that by its mighty thrust
Is squeezed to a working thing,
Will drive the drill through the flying rock-dust

With a joyous whirr and ring.
There is hope in the shock
Of the drill and the rock,
Of what the future may feel,
There's joy in the throb
Of air and its sob,
When urging the biting steel.
O! these are the songs in work-time we hear,
These are the songs that to labor bring cheer.

CAMPAIGN SONG

As from the conflict stern we rest
With arms in hand and mail on breast,
We'll sing, though lately we were pressed,
A song of our promised land;
Or a song of the way we have journeyed
And of the camps we have made on our way
Since we entered the ranks of God's army,
And set out for the land of endless day.
Then loud let us raise our praises
At the close of this hard-fought day,
For the grace He always giveth—
The grace He giveth alway.

Our early steps were sorely tried,
Fair Vanity had fain been guide
"As others do so should you, too,"
Oft the dazzling temptress cried;
But the songs of dear Zion reached our ears
From the lips of the brave who passed before
And we knew that they waved victorious palms
Around the throne on the beautiful shore.
And louder they raised their praises
Through the hours of unchanging day
He giveth grace—He giveth grace—
Sufficient His grace alway.

When our feet longer held the road
Closer our spirits drew to God,
Yet proud ambition with a nod
Would lure our thoughts far astray.

But ere too far before her power we fell
Redeeming love made its sweet voice be heard,
And many blessings for the poor did tell
With hopeful words for those that sadly erred.
Then with cheer our sadness mingling
Amid our shame we gladly raised,
Timid songs His grace adoring—
His grace—grace that should be praised.

Since then we oft have fiercely fought
Lest Envy should control our thought,
Or that our hands by Malice bought
Should seek vengeance unholy;
And useless cares we never should have borne
Have bowed our shoulders 'neath their hateful load,
While jealous voices raised in spite or scorn
Have strewed keen thorns along our pilgrim road.
Now with their sorrows behind us
We can look with upturned gaze
Where the rest we seek awaiteth
And we shall behold His face.

And though hard has been the striving
'Gainst the Evil One's contriving,
There'll be joy in the arriving
When salvation is complete,
And with joy through the strife that remaineth,
We shall sing of that sweet beautiful land
Where the communion of saints is perfect
Amid the throngs of the purified band.

Of trials we will not complain,
But praises sing with glad refrain,
For the harder is the campaign
The sweeter will be our rest.

SUGAR TIME

When the promise of the summer
Wakes the sleeping maple trees,
And returning birds are floating,
Their first shy notes on the breeze;
Then the young and old together
Dream of sugar-camps aglow,
For sug'ring is a jolly time
'Twixt the summer and the snow.

In the evening's mirk and shadow
When the fires are burning bright,
They gather round the steaming pans
In the hemlock's flick'ring light;
And the elders swap their stories
Of their courting long ago,
For wooing's always good in April
'Twixt the summer and the snow

Old grandma's face is bright with smiles
As round flies the pleasant jest
How grandpa met her by his wiles
And how well his suit he pressed.
And the old man chuckles gaily
O'er his tricks of long ago,
When he wooed and won his sweetheart
'Twixt the summer and the snow.